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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEAL

Edelman Calls on Turkey to Join International Consensus on  
Syria - Milliyet  
Sezer to Urge Syrian Pullback During Damascus Visit -  
Hurriyet  
US Embassy Denies Turk Released From Guantanamo - Hurriyet  
General Buyukanit: Turkey Has No Iraq Policy - Hurriyet  
Zarkawi Plans Attacks Against 'Soft Targets' in US - Sabah

##### OPINION MAKERS

Edelman Advises Turkey to Support UN Resolution on Syria -  
Zaman  
US Urges Turkey to Pressure Syria - Radikal  
Straw Reiterates UK Support for Turkey's EU Drive - Radikal  
Turkish Driver Killed in Iraq - Cumhuriyet  
Syria Leaves Northern Lebanon - Yeni Safak  
Lebanese Hold Mass Rally in Beirut - Cumhuriyet  
Sharon Rebuffs Palestinian Calls for Ceasefire - Cumhuriyet  
Palestinian Groups Ready for 'Conditional' Ceasefire - Zaman  
Turkey Leads European Countries with 9.6 Percent Growth -  
Radikal

#### BRIEFING

Ambassador Edelman on Syria, US/Turkey: US Ambassador Eric Edelman called on Turkey to join the international call for a full and immediate Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. The Ambassador made the statement during his visit to the northwestern city of Bursa. Responding to questions after calling on the Bursa governor, Edelman stressed the international consensus behind a UN Security Council resolution 1559: 'We hope that Turkey will also join that international consensus, in supporting a thorough and immediate Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. A number of reports commented that the US views President Sezer's planned visit to Damascus in April as 'untimely.' On claims of anti-Americanism in the Turkish press, Edelman said he is aware of Turkish concerns about the situation in Iraq and the US military presence in Iraq. But he also stressed the need for accuracy in press reports: 'What concerns us most is that much of the time news reports are based on conspiracy theories. Ambassador Edelman also said the US wishes to have a long-term friendship with Turkey. Mainstream dailies regard the Edelman remarks as an official 'warning' or even an 'ultimatum' to Ankara. Despite 'warnings' by the United States, "Hurriyet" proclaims, President Sezer has not canceled his visit to Syria. The Turkish President will likely urge Syrian president Assad to accede to demands by the US and EU to pull out of Lebanon, the paper speculates. An unidentified US official told "Hurriyet" that Sezer's visit to Damascus could be positive if he were to clearly call on Assad to comply with the demands of the international community.

FM Gul Visits Britain: In a joint press conference after meeting with the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw in London Monday, FM Abdullah Gul said that Turkey will sign an adaptation protocol with the EU for expanding Turkey's customs union agreement with the EU in a way to cover new member states, including Cyprus. Gul stressed, however, that the signing will not amount to recognition of the Greek Cypriot administration. Straw reiterated Britain's support for Turkey's bid to join the European union. In earlier remarks the same day, Gul recalled the broad support given by the Turkish Cypriots to the UN-backed plan for reunification of Cyprus last year. 'Despite this fact, the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot side has continued, while the Greek Cypriots are being honored,' he added. The

Turkish foreign minister said relations between Turkey and Armenia have been improving in recent years, saying efforts are continuing to reach a compromise between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Gul rejected claims that the AK Party is Islamist, or that it had a 'hidden agenda.' On Iraq, Gul said there is no alternative to a political solution, underlining the significance of the first general elections held in the war-torn country in January.

US Denies Turkish Detainee Released From Guantanamo: A US Ankara Embassy official denied on Monday that a Turkish man accused of ties with Al-Qaeda had been released from Guantanamo and handed over to Turkish authorities. 'There has been no release of a Turkish citizen in recent days,' the American official said, denying press reports claiming that 23-year-old German-born Murat Kurnaz had been released and flown to Incirlik Airbase in the southern city of Adana.

General Points to PKK Efforts to Regroup in SE Turkey: On Monday, Turkey's Land Forces Commander General Yasar Buyukanit said the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has reformed itself in both Turkey and Iraq. General Buyukanit said the position of Turkey in the struggle against the PKK has been weakened, whereas the armed strength of the terrorist organization in Turkey has reached a level not seen since 1999, when PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured. Buyukanit complained about restrictions placed on military actions in southeast Turkey following the lifting of emergency rule in the region.

MFA Criticizes HRW Report on Displaced Kurds: Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) criticized a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on the situation of displaced Kurds in Turkey, describing the report as 'far from realistic.' The MFA statement claimed that the HRW report ignores ongoing efforts to enable Turkish citizens displaced in the 1990s due to terrorism to return to their homes. The statement noted that Turkey is cooperating with international organizations including the UN and EU in an effort to establish international standards with regard to this issue. The HRW report had characterized figures provided by the Turkish Government on returns of displaced people to the southeast as 'not credible.'

Court Ruling Bans Foreigners From Purchasing Real Estate: Turkey's Constitutional Court on Monday annulled provisions of a law allowing foreign nationals to buy land and property in the country. The law, adopted by the Turkish parliament in July 2003, had been strongly criticized by the opposition and Turkish nationalists. A Court official said the ruling did not mean that 'foreigners cannot buy anything in Turkey,' and called on the Parliament to pass modifications that would put certain controls on foreign real estate purchases. Some recent reports in the Turkish press have claimed that companies from Israel have acquired large amounts of land in southeast Turkey. "Zaman" says on its front page that foreign business and tourism representatives believe the court decision will mean a substantial loss of revenues for Turkey. The Constitutional Court gave the government until a summer deadline to pass modified legislation.

Turkish Truck Driver Killed in Iraq: A truck driver in a Turkish convoy escorted by US troops was killed when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb near the village of Al-Hajaj, north of Baghdad. Reports say the convoy was traveling south from the Turkish border and that the driver died shortly after being rescued from the burning truck by US soldiers. A similar attack in the same area over the weekend killed an unidentified truck driver who was presumed to be Turkish.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: Regional Foreign Policy

"Beware of a Derailment on Foreign Policy"  
Ilter Turkmen wrote in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (3/15):  
"The ruling party AKP have presented us with a series of confusing, if not horrifying, moves on foreign policy issues such as Cyprus, the EU, and the Middle East. . Turkish policy on the Middle East contains enough contradictory elements to confuse anyone. While the entire world enthused about the Iraq elections, Turkey was busy questioning their legitimacy. Turkey's support for the Iraq Turkmen Front (ITF) did not work very well, as we saw more Turkmen elected from the Shiite and Kurdish candidate lists than from the ITF. Turkey has been reluctant to support the UNSC resolution calling for a complete Syrian pullout from Lebanon. We somehow elevated the role of the Islamic Conference Organization out of all realistic proportion. Turkey has also given the impression that religious motives are playing a determinative factor in Turkish foreign policy making. It seems that Turkish foreign policy has lost its sense of priorities. . A multi-faceted foreign policy, as AKP seems to prefer, is not a bad principle as long as it does not prevent us from focusing on our priorities. As for a 'rhythmic' foreign policy, I have no idea what that means."

In any event, it appears that Turkish foreign policy is suffering from `arhythmic' symptoms, and that Turkish diplomacy has been reduced to a matter of internal rhetoric."

"Questions for Edelman"

Melih Asik argued in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (3/15): "US Ambassador Edelman has called on Syria to comply with UN resolution 1559 by withdrawing from Lebanon. It is indeed a must for Syria to pull out. Yet this issue brings some other questions to one's mind. Why is the Ambassador not been making any comment regarding Israel's refusal to comply with UN resolutions? Why is the US not pulling out of Iraq? How is the American occupation of Iraq compatible with UN resolutions? And one last question: the US is provoking Israel against Iran -- how does this fit in with UN principles?"

"Washington Report: Trust in Turkey Has Been Shaken"

Sami Kohen observed from Washington in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (3/15): "Turkey's credibility and its image in Washington have been weakened. The US no longer views Turkey as the old, loyal ally. Even if Turkey's reliability is not being questioned publicly by the US administration, such doubts are being increasingly raised by researchers and journalists. Growing anti-Americanism in Turkey and Ankara's direction in foreign policy are the main sources of skepticism and concern in Washington. An official told me that although the US is being criticized in many allied countries, the criticism in Turkey is more like an `attack' that is bound to cause negative effects in bilateral relations. It is noticeable that the Turkish government's recent policies on regional issues have been a huge disappointment and have created skepticism in Washington. The US' expectation from Turkey is that Ankara would make its differences known through diplomatic channels rather than through the press. Both the US administration and the other circles related to Turkey share the common hope that the turbulence in the Turkish-US relations will be eliminated by good-faith efforts on both sides. US observers stress that the US Administration's pro-Turkey stance depends on Turkey's behavior in its relations with the US. The US has apparently passed responsibility to Turkey to improve the bilateral relationship."

EDELMAN